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IN GERMAN HARVEST FIELDS

BY J. J. RAULSTON.

With original illustrations by Hugo Mühlig.

THE dreamy fall days, with their stillness, waning sunshine, fading leaves, and lush abundance of vegetation, have always appealed very strongly to the imagination of both painters and writers. When to this is added the sentiment of the autumn, when is yielded the fruitage of the year's preparation and pain, there is no cause for surprise that an artist rejoices in this season.

The harvest scenes of Hugo Mühlig laid the foundation of the pleasant fame which he has already acquired in Europe as a painter of rural life in the quiet province where he has made his studies. He is still a young man—perhaps thirty-five years of age—and a thorough German. He studied at Düsseldorf, where now he has established his home; and he first attracted notice by a series of small oil paintings exhibited in the Kunst Halle in that ancient abiding place of art.

These early paintings set the key in which his work has remained and has steadily gained in popularity. They were hints of gray days, with men in smock-frocks steadily swinging those long German scythes that would seem so awkward to an American wheat-cradler; misty stretches over fields of vegetables where women and children were weeding, helped by older children and hindered by babies.

Women working in fields are a familiar sight in Germany and France; it is perhaps not more the natural picturesqueness of their attire and attitudes in their



DIGGING THE POTATO CROP.



HARVESTING THE RYE.

labor which attract, than the sentiment—the underlying sense which the most accustomed man must feel—that the custom is a bad one, and the necessity for it a bit of national pathos, if not an outcome of something worse.

But this sad aspect is not allowed to dominate Mühlig's drawings. The women digging the potatoes by that old thatched farm-house are not worrying over their hard lot; and those in the midst of the rye-field, gathering up the sheaves the men hew down, and lounging upon the fragrant straw between times, are taking great enjoyment of the work and the sunshine.

All of Mühlig's painting shows an unusual power of combining suitable landscape with nicely drawn, well-finished figures, and sometimes these stand foremost, as in the picture of the moorland shepherd sitting in the little hollow by his fire, while his dog keeps a vigilant eye upon the feeding flock. The sketch of the farmer making secure the railing of his sheep-fold, is another rural bit, very homely and pleasing in its suggestions.



THE SHEPHERD'S FIRE ON THE MOOR.



STRENGTHENING THE SHEEP-FOLD.